

DARTMOUTH STUDIES IN TROPICAL ECOLOGY 2000

EDITORS

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NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

The Biology FSP at Dartmouth offers students the incredible opportunity to personally experience the intricacies of tropical ecosystems. Students gain an appreciation for the rigors of fieldwork, from the long hours spent in the field or at the computer to the time spent fiendishly planning to swipe the communal benadryl. In addition to the knowledge gained, the true value of the trip lies in the opportunity to share experiences in these unparalleled habitats with 20 other Lizano-worshipping biologists.

Anchored by the knowledge and passion of three captains, the team was introduced to new pitfalls and possibilities at each site. Dick transformed the team from starry-eyed tree-huggers into observant researchers and enthusiastic bird-watchers. Matt challenged the team to favor provocative hypotheses over predictable questions, fueling our efforts with his enthusiasm. John coached the team through the difficult transition from terrestrial to marine projects, using his vast experience to inspire greater appreciation for coral reef ecology. Joining the team in keep-away at Santa Rosa, karaoke in San Jose, and wiffleball in Jamaica, these three men were essential leaders and eager members on the trip.

Craig, Laura, and Winsor carried out all of the tasks necessary to keep the team in action. In addition to the more glamorous tasks of editing papers and developing statistical models, these three juggernauts of academia were also there to repair broken equipment and willingly answer all questions (except Craig, who would only answer every fourth question.) Craig's knowledge and good humor were an immeasurable asset to the group. In addition to hours of editing and constant encouragement, Laura and Winsor were perfect models of field fashion (binoculars and fanny packs at all times).

The professionalism and reliability of both the Organization for Tropical Studies and the Discovery Bay Marine Laboratory were essential to the trip's success. We are indebted to the cooks from OTS and at Discovery Bay, especially Mrs. Smiley, who kept our tummies full of great food, despite our enormous appetites. The following people provided invaluable information about the different organisms and habitats of Costa Rica: Eugenio Gonzalez, Mauricio, and Nicole at Palo Verde; Richard LaVal at Monteverde; Alberto Torres at Cerro, and Orlando Vargas (and bullet-ant guy) at La Selva. In Jamaica, Peter Gayle and Michael Haley granted access to all equipment necessary for projects and offered their time to introduce the team to the bay.

Beyond the contents of this book, the fondest memories of this trip stem from the time spent revelling in the intense beauty and fragility of the places visited. The unique challenges and thrills of this opportunity could have been experienced as individuals, but the personalities within this group allowed a team to travel through them as one. It is this unity that we most appreciate and will cherish throughout our future adventures.

Linda, Marc, and James